177. metic book for an old man called Samuel who produced a series of swot
87 books on various subjects, beautifully tabulated books with questions
876 and answers, invaluable for examinations and used even in my day when we and our school teachers whisked them out of sight of Education Inspectors who came on the prowl for just such unprogressive methods of education. He also went across to the American Mission School where quite often the teachers were more Christian and painstaking than brilliant, to help old Teacher Nellie with Geometry riders, and in this way he met my mother.

873 My parents could not get married as soon as they left school. My
593 father had first to go to the University, which consisted then of Rangoon
562 College, affiliated to Calcutta University, and then he felt he must work
582 to buy my grandmother a big enough plot of paddy land so that her two youngest sons would not need to look after her in Ye, but could come into the world like my father. He now felt that they should not be denied the wonderful opportunities which he had found. My father did go to College, but had passed only his F. A. (corresponding to Intermediate) when he heard that my mother was now going out to teach in a school at Thaton, and that she was having to put on a European gown and hat in order to be less conspicuous, because at that time no Burmese Buddhist ladies went out to work. My father left his studies at once and got a job in the same school to look after her, and it was only after some months of persuasion by Grandfather and my mother that he consented to leave and look for a better paid position.

647 He managed to obtain a myookship in the Government Service,
177. which is a junior administrative post but considered a very good job for
65 Burmans in those days. In this job he could save enough to buy Grand-
582 mother her paddy land, after which he and my mother would get married. But my father with his good looks, his teetotaller habits, and his myookship, was considered a desirable son-in-law by many people, and other parents were not like Grandfather; they would try to engage the young man's affections for their daughters. I am sure my mother spent the next three years in some anxiety, as she heard stories of the young myook's gay and happy life in such far-off towns as Toungoo and Shwegyin. But one day the children dashed up to her with a telegram; she opened it and read *Gyi will you marry me.* My mother, who has never shown any excitement as far as I can remember, got up very quietly and went to her chest of drawers. She took out ten annas in change, and wired back *Yes.*

584 Soon after this my father arrived amidst great excitement on the part of my mother's family and a pretence of complete ignorance on Grandfather's part. My aunts expected an explosion from him when

tinkled with every passing breeze. The Shwe Dagon Paya was a beautiful and sacred thing. In the early mornings it gave a radiance to the clear air and the blue sky; in the daylight it shone forth like a blaze of gold, burning and pure; in the evenings it glowed softly as the breeze tinkled its bells, and filled the heart with a gentle sadness which is not grief but a sweet perception of unearthly things; and at night the lights flooded it to stand high and illumined above the dark wooded slopes of the hill. At all times and from all parts of Rangoon it could be seen, calm and sublime, with the same smiling look as is seen on the face of the Buddha, not smiling in the eyes or mouth but in the serene expression of inward calm.

As we landed in Rangoon we saw a great gathering of people waiting to meet us. Going abroad for years of study is still a rare enough event to be of interest to all relatives and neighbours, so that the people were assembled not only for an affectionate reunion, but also to observe in what way the stay in England might have corrupted Burmese habits. In the case of a man it is always feared that he may bring back an English wife, and it sometimes happens that a loved child who has been away for five and six years may be greeted with tears and mourning rather than expressions of joy, if he has married an English girl. The tears of mother and sisters are very heartfelt; they express shame at what the neighbours will think, sorrow at the alienation of the man and his children which must inevitably occur, and chagrin at the loss of the rich dowry which might have been procured in the marriage market.

Even when a man does not marry in England, he is strongly scrutinized for undesirable preferences in the matter of marriage arrangements. I remember the night my brother came home. It was his first evening in Burma after nine years of English schooling and University, and it was clear enough that he was neither married nor secretly engaged to an English girl. But my Ma Ma Gyi, my eldest woman cousin who had children as old as we were, subjected him to a searching enquiry. "Set-Set," she said, calling him by his childhood name, "do you think English girls are more attractive than Burmese girls?" My brother who had many English friends but had not noticed any Burmese girls during his few hours in Burma, tried not to answer this question. On being held to it, he said they were different from each other and could not be compared. My cousin said, "But which do *you* like better?" She was getting quite stern by this time, and my mother and we who felt very sorry for my brother were all praying that he would tell a lie, as we held our breath. My brother repeated with much awkwardness that the two were different; so now my cousin took his opinion for granted, and lectured him on the desirability of marrying in an orthodox Burmese manner so that he would prove himself a good son to his mother, a good

177. brother to his young sisters, and thus give joy to the whole family.
57 "For," said she, "our family has always commanded respect. Grandfather
873 was a great man, and you are the only son of the youngest family of his
grandchildren, and it should not be said that with us the end tapers to a
186 point;" which is the expression for a stock which degenerates with
582 successive generations.

In the case of a girl, there was not of course, the fear that she would bring back an English husband, but the concern that Burmese standards of morality and dignity would be affected by an unchaperoned stay in a foreign country was very great. As we landed, I remembered enough of my childhood environment to feel the eyes of elder relatives and friends on me while I tried to restrain the wild excitement and love I felt at seeing again my mother and my young sisters now grown so sweet and shy, and I noticed also that my brother had been home long enough not to kiss me in front of my aunts as he had done when he himself had first returned from England. I felt this scrutiny also when my mother took me on the round of obeisance visits during my first days at home, and it formed a complement to the visit which I had paid to each of these elder relatives and friends before I left for England three years before. Then, each had given me a lecture which contained strong injunctions to keep to the path of virtue, modesty and dignity. But these were just *son-ma saga*, admonitory words, to be received with meekness, and not a slight on the strength of my character, just as now, when, satisfied with their scrutiny, they told my mother that her womb should be layered
[192] with gold leaf (sacrilegiously using the term for the gilding of sacred objects) for having brought forth such daughters, I was not expected to take conceit.

In all the houses of friends in Rangoon, in Thaton and Ye, I went
192 through the same ritual, but the words of the hpongyi at Thaton moved
186 me more than any other. "Now I will tell three stories about Mi Mi Khaing," he said, and proceeded in beautiful words and a chanting flow; "You are like a young tree planted of good seed in the fertile earth. Now the tree is heavy with ripe fruit, but the boughs are tender and bend under the weight. The tree must grow carefully and steadily, so that the full fruit do not break the young bough.....Let your stature be measured by your shadow that is cast after the noonday sun, for your knowledge and learning are now at noonday height. So your shadow will grow longer and longer towards the setting of the day.....Let your merit be like a river that gathers more strength from the rain that falls about it, and grows from a stream into a great river before it joins the mighty Thammodhaya." Then he took the monk's expression off his face, and turned to me with a smile and asked in a normal speaking

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

lata for the original flavoured earth, and of Thale rice for the leguminous creeper, desire arose among them, and four of the men took the four women to wife. The fifth man naturally resented being left compulsorily single, and pelted the happy couples with stones on their marriage night. Sympathy with the feelings of this archetypal bachelor has perpetuated the stone-throwing by the lu-byos down to the present day, and if there is no dearth of eligible spinsters in our times, the lonely bachelor may be allowed to express his envy of his friend's bliss without being accused of anything but gross cupidity.

After marriage the couple almost always live for two or three years in the house of the bride's parents, the son-in-law becoming one of the family and contributing to its support. Setting up a separate establishment, even in Rangoon, where the young husband is a clerk in an English office, is looked upon with disfavour as a piece of pride and ostentation. If the girl is an only daughter, she and her husband stay on till the old people die.

Polygamy is recognised and permitted, but practically does not exist now in British territory. A man with more than one wife becomes a subject of common talk, and a native official now living is well known all through the delta as the myo-ok with twenty wives. In native territory the right to have several wives was equally little used in practice. Many of the high officials who travelled about over large districts had wives in almost all the towns they visited —a custom in great measure induced by the rule which provided that the mayā-gyi, the chief wife, had to be left in Mandalay as a hostage for the fidelity of the official. But the great bulk of the people are, and always have been, monogamous. King Mindôn had fifty-three recognised *wives*, of whom thirty-seven survived him. His children numbered one hundred and ten, of whom upwards of fifty survived him. Besides the wives, like Solomon, he had numerous concubines. So, indeed, have many lesser people.

The forbidden degrees are few. Marriages with mother, daughter, sister, and half-sister, aunt, grandmother, and granddaughter, are forbidden, but none else. A son may marry his stepmother; it is expressly mentioned in the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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582 643 Dammathat. The sovereign always married at least one half-sister to ensure the purity of the royal blood, but, rather illogically, the issue of this union was not by any means necessarily heir to the throne. The son whom the king, or his ministers after his death, named, succeeded, or more commonly still, the son who could best maintain his position by force.

586 The liberty of divorce is practically unrestricted, except by the elaborate laws respecting the division of property. According to the Laws of Menu a woman may obtain a divorce among other reasons for the following: When her husband is poor and unable to support her; when he is always ailing; when he does not work and leads an idle life; when he is incapacitated by reason of old age; when he becomes a cripple after marriage.

And a man may obtain a divorce if his wife has no male children, if she has no love for her husband, or if she persists in going to a house where he tells her she must not visit, and so on.

The lawgiver seems in fact to have laid down that marriage is a civil contract which either party can dissolve; but, unless with good reason, the one that wishes to separate must suffer in property, more or less severely, according as the plea is good or bad.

Property, for this purpose, is said to be of three kinds. Pa-yin, property acquired by, or in possession of, persons before marriage. Let-htet-pwa, property acquired by husband or wife after marriage. Tin-thi, property inherited or obtained by gift. Pa-yin after marriage becomes hnit-pa-sôn, that is, the joint property of husband and wife, but only when it is agreed between them either before or after marriage that the property shall be put together for the mutual benefit.

In the event of a divorce both parties take away whatever pa-yin they may have had on marriage, and the let-htet-pwa is divided either by mutual agreement, or by the decision of the village elders who sanction the separation.

586 593 But divorces are far from being so common as most writers would have us believe. The warmth of family affection is one of the strongest traits of the race, and the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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and pertinacity with which they defied the mosquitoes under the shade of the trees, and droned away on their pipes all through a tight-tunicked and perspiring Rangoon afternoon garden party, as the observant Burman imagined, at one endless tune. The national music is not written down, and each actor has a variation of his own, but the smallest girl in the audience would detect a kayāthan from a dobatthan with as much readiness as any English boy would distinguish "Drops o' Brandy" from the "Old Hundred"! But there are some people who do not like the Italian opera, and even say so. 533

The following short outline of the *Zawtagômma pyazat* will give an idea of the style of the more popular drama, as distinguished from the purely religious birth-story. The writer was an old player himself. He lived at Pegu, and the *Zawtagômma* was perhaps his most successful effort. The text has been published at one of the vernacular presses in Rangoon, and the sketch given is a translation of the Zatlan, the "path of the play," prefixed by the editor. "In the country of Pyinyawwada, of which Yazôtta was the sovereign, the name of the Southern Queen was Thunemadewi, and that of the Northern Queen Thukethidewi. The Queen of the Southern Palace was about to bear a child, and the king issued an order that her majesty of the North should attend on her. This was very irritating to the Northern Queen, and she resolved to ruin Thunemadewi, and for that purpose conspired with Shin Gwe Ni, the midwife. As soon as the child was born it was to be killed, and set afloat on the river in an earthen pot, and the *accoucheuse* was to say the Head Queen had been delivered of a still-born baby. A twin son and daughter were born, and Shin Gwe Ni put each of them in a jar and launched them on the river, and went and told the king that they were still-born. Yazôtta, the king, was very angry, and punished his consort by setting her to dig the ground and carry water for the palace. The Queen of the North was promoted to be Head Queen, and her daughter, Pyinsarupa, was made tabin-daing (*i.e.* she was set apart as wife for the next king, and not allowed to marry). 536 539 [643] [582]

"With regard to the bodies of the prince and princess.

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matter. The wife's opportunities for social intercourse with her family of orientation are, of course, greatest when residence is established in her home village; if, however, a couple from different villages marry and find it most opportune to settle in the husband's community, the chances are that the wife will maintain contact with her family of orientation by visits from time to time. People from Tadagale seldom marry individuals from villages that are very distant. The structural features of bilaterality and absence of extension militate against inequality and male domination in the family.

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562
Burmese culture is frequently remarked for the equality of the sexes, in contrast to the neighboring cultures of India and China. This status of the sexes seems to be the historic resultant of two patterns of thought. One is the apparently very old, pre-Buddhist emphasis upon equality, involving equal inheritance, equal sharing of the property brought to the marriage, equal division of property in the event of divorce, a prominent female role in social and economic life, and the absence of transmission of surnames. The other thought pattern dates from the superimposition of Buddhism upon older Burmese concepts: whatever ideas of male superiority exist stem from Buddhist ideas of reincarnation, it being assumed that only a man can attain reincarnation.

593
In the family household the wife's role includes not only such routine tasks as preparation of food and serving of meals, keeping the house orderly and clean, and looking after small children; very often it involves control of the family income and the making of all important decisions as to expenditures.

Certain observances and taboos, reflective of a deferential attitude towards males, are expected of a wife. She is careful that her lower garments do not touch her husband's bed or his personal belongings; she avoids touching her husband's head. It is believed that the breaking of such taboos may ruin the husband's success and glory, especially his spiritual attainments. These injunctions are followed as a matter of course by village wives and will be broken deliberately only as an act of malice by a woman who wishes to harm or lower her husband for some reason.

837
Despite the various equalitarian aspects of husband-wife relations, there is a tendency towards a double standard of sexual conduct. A husband who has reason to believe that his wife is engaging in extra-marital affairs is very likely to display violent anger, beat her, and break up the marriage. The wife of a philandering husband, on the other hand, will usually do no more than display hurt feelings for a brief period; rarely will she separate from her husband, especially if they have children.

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Siblings. It is the duty of the younger to show deference to the elder. This pertains to the order of serving food, fetching and carrying things, and even the arrangement of sleeping mats -- a younger sibling should never sleep with his feet extended towards an elder sibling. Upon the death of a parent, the eldest child of the same sex assumes that parent's socio-economic role in the family.

Father and Daughter. Consistent with the age principle, it is a daughter's duty to be obedient and to wait upon her father. Once an unmarried daughter passes the age of puberty, her father is expected to lead a circumspect and moral life more than ever before. Any deviant sexual behavior or drunkenness on his part reflects upon his daughter and detracts from her marital chances.

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Mother and Son. Although a son owes obedience to his mother, her claim upon him in this regard is tempered by the fact that, in Burmese Buddhist

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

various subjects, and he told me he had no children; they were dead. 621 626

'When were you married?' I asked, just for something to say, and he said when he was thirty-two. 582

'Isn't that rather old to be just married?' I asked. 'I thought you Burmans often married at eighteen and twenty. What made you wait so long?'

And he told me that in his village men were not allowed to marry till they were about thirty. 'Great harm comes,' he said, 'of allowing boys and girls to make foolish marriages when they are too young. It was never allowed in my village.'

'And if a young man fell in love with a girl?' I asked.

'He was told to leave her alone.'

'And if he didn't?'

'If he didn't, he was put in the stocks for one day or two days, and if that was no good, he was banished from the village.'

A monk complained to me of the bad habits of the young men in villages. 'Could government do nothing?' he asked. They used shameful words, and they would shout as they passed his monastery, and disturb the lads at their lessons and the girls at the well. They were not well-behaved. In the Burmese time they would have been punished for all this—made to draw so many buckets of water for the school-gardens, or do some road-making, or even be put in the stocks. Now the headman was afraid to do anything, for fear of the great government. It was very bad for the young men, he said. 621 626 177

16F ielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER XV

WOMEN—II

'The husband is lord of the wife.'
Laws of Manu.

MARRIAGE is not a religious ceremony among the Burmese. Religion has no part in it at all; as religion has refrained from interfering with government, so does it in the relations of man and wife. Marriage is purely a worldly business, like entering into partnership; and religion, the Buddhist religion, has nothing to do with such things. Those who accept the teachings of the great teacher in all their fulness do not marry.

Indeed, marriage is not a ceremony at all. It is strange to find that the Burmese have actually no necessary ceremonial. The Laws of Manu, which are the laws governing all such matters, make no mention of any marriage ceremony; it is, in fact, a status. Just as two men may go into partnership in business without executing any deed, so a man and a woman may enter into the marriage state without undergoing any form. Amongst the richer Burmese there is, however, sometimes a ceremony.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

marriage, which is with most people a ceremony performed in full daylight with all accessories of display, is with the Burmese generally a secret. Two or three friends, perhaps, will be called quietly to the house, and the man and the woman will eat together, and thus become husband and wife. Then they will separate again, and not for several days, or even weeks perhaps, will it be known that they are married; for it is seldom that they can set up house for themselves just at once. Often they will marry and live apart for a time with their parents. Sometimes they will go and live together with the man's parents, but more usually with the girl's mother. Then after a time, when they have by their exertions made a little money, they build a house and go to live there; but sometimes they will live on with the girl's parents for years.

A girl does not change her name when she marries, nor does she wear any sign of marriage, such as a ring. Her name is always the same, and there is nothing to a stranger to denote whether she be married or not, or whose wife she is; and she keeps her property as her own. Marriage does not confer upon the husband any power over his wife's property, either what she brings with her, what she earns, or what she inherits subsequently; it all remains her own, as does his remain his own. But usually property acquired after marriage is held jointly. You will inquire, for instance, who is the owner of this garden, and be told Maung Han, Ma Shwè, the former being the husband's name and the latter the wife's. Both names are used very frequently in business and in legal proceedings, and indeed it is

226 438 484 [431] oranges, guava fruit, mangosteen fruit - together worth about forty or fifty rupees. When he arrived at Pathwe this was distributed among the members of his family, and also some relatives and the phongyis. On one such trip he made Rs. 2700/- which he carried back hidden away in a jar of salt.

494 465 U Myaing never came in to Rangoon purely for a visit. Besides bringing down fish, U Myaing also came to Rangoon before the war to buy some motor parts and accessories such as tyres, tubes, etc. which they could not obtain in Pathwe village or in Pantanaw town. At that period in his life U Myaing used to drive a bus between Pathwe and the village on the bank of the river across from Pathwe. There was a cart track for a road, and they used to carry passengers at a rupee per head. In the rains this cart track became impossible and so they traversed this route only from TA-ZAUNG-BON to KASON months. U Myaing worked on this route for three summers. In the rains they shifted operations to the Maubin Ye Le route, which was a 10 mile journey, and occasionally the 10 mile route from Ye Le to HSE-DAING-

[491] MAW. He worked at these places for two rainy seasons, from WASO right up till the month of TA-ZAUNG-BON. The bus was owned by his cousin who collected all the earnings for each day. At that time bus drivers were hired at Rs. 45/- a month, plus sweet tea, food, shelter and one packet of cigarettes a day. "In Pathwe all the houses were too large and could accomodate a great many more people than they actually did. This was because each one erected his own building after the example of the other houses in the village. The person who hired the bus driver merely installed him in his home".

[589] This was when U Myaing was 17 or 18 years old. He was not paid anything, but the family was provided with everything they needed - food, clothes, etc. (U Myaing was still unmarried and the family

● [582] consisted of two sisters, his mother and himself. (He did not marry

[431] till the age of thirty.) Both U Myaing and Daw Aw Zar estimated that the things they received from the bus owner would have amounted to much more than forty five rupees' worth.

23: Benedict ●
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

ALL Southeast Asia
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/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, 1-5 (1949-1950) 1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

593 husband's kinfolk. Post-marital residence is independent and is decided very
[591] largely on the basis of economic opportunity. The wife's opportunities for social intercourse with her family of orientation are, of course, greatest when residence is established in her home village; if, however, a couple from different villages marry and find it most opportune to settle in the husband's community, the
[574] chances are that the wife will maintain contact with her family of orientation by
[582] visits from time to time; such marriages seldom unite persons from villages that are very far apart. The very structural features of bilaterality and absence of extension militate against inequality and male domination.

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593 trast to the neighboring cultures of India and China. This status of the sexes seems to be the resultant historically of two patterns of thought. One is an apparently very old, pre-Buddhist emphasis upon equality, involving equal inheri-
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[177] ideas of male superiority exist in Burmese life stem from Buddhist notions of
[775] reincarnation. Although Buddha never expressed himself explicitly on the matter, it is taken for granted that only a male can attain Nirvana, since Gautama Buddha, who attained that state, was a male.

462 In the family household the wife's role includes not only such routine tasks as
592 the preparation of food and serving of meals, keeping the house orderly and clean, and looking after small children; very often it involves control of the family income and the making of all important decisions as to expenditures.

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784 of the female partner in marriage. She is careful that her lower garments do not touch her husband's bed or his personal belongings; she avoids touching her husband's head. It is believed that the breaking of such taboos may ruin the husband's success and glory, especially his spiritual attainments. These injunctions are followed as a matter of course by Burmese wives and will be broken deliberately only as an act of spite by a woman who wishes to harm or lower her husband for some reason.

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25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

181. THE IDEAL AND THE REAL.

They are generally condoned. Burmans do not wait to make money in order to marry, but marry in order to make money. Girls marry from the age of about twenty, and men about twenty-five. The marriage is a quiet affair. A day is fixed, when the lad and his parents repair to the home of the girl, whither some of the elders of the village (*lûdyî*) have been invited for witness. The father of the lad addresses the parents of the girl in this wise: "Seeing that our children love each other, we pray you let your daughter be as our daughter and our son as your son" (*ekkau*). The girl's parents express their pleasure and approval, and according to one usage, the couple thereupon join hands (*letlat*), which means marriage; but the joining-of-hands is as a rule figurative. After this the lad goes and fetches his bedding, curtain, and clothes and places them in the house in token of reception into the family. In conclusion, the parties and the witnesses eat pickled tea together. When one or both parties are strangers in the place, friends undertake the part of parents and the elders make inquiries as to blood-relationship and pre-existing ties. Kinship closer than first-cousin and the corresponding step-relationships are respected—except by royalty (p. 170). Sometimes marriages are of a more festive description (*mingala*). Astrologers are called in and company entertained as at the *nâbauk mingala*. Other unions, again, are by mere mutual agreement, without formalities of any kind. By time-honoured custom the lads of the village claim the right to pelt the house of the new-married pair at night (*gè-pyit*), and it is usual to buy them off. New couples mostly start life in

182. TATTOOING (TOGWIN, see p. 78).